



18TH EHEALTH NETWORK 12-13 NOVEMBER 2020, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

COVER NOTE

10.4 D7.1: Guidelines for IT interoperability

1. Issue at stake

The eHAction Interoperability Guide is a brief high-level guide to what interoperability is, its importance and the main areas of standardisation and quality that enable trustworthy data exchange and reuse. It has been elaborated based on the conceptual design, which was submitted for information to the eHN in spring 2020, in terms of its target audience, its breadth and depth of content and key design characteristics. It has been collaboratively created with the participation of the community of the informal network of European hospitals established in eHAction and the collaboration with two international non for profit organisations, namely, Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE) and the European Institute for Innovation through Health Data (I~HD) for the updating of the content that is maintained by these organisations. The current implementation of the Guide is therefore also a proof of concept of this co-creation principle which has been tested with the above organisations.

The sustainability of this guide beyond the end of the project is now the most important challenge that needs be addressed over the remaining lifetime of eHAction.

2. Summary

The eHAction interoperability Guide targets the senior executive level in health care providing organisations. Its strength lies in that it pitches – in a few pages – what a hospital manager should know and appreciate about the value of interoperability.

The guide, *by design*, is not meant to be a “complete” eHealth interoperability guide; this would be neither feasible nor sustainable. It is not the objective to re-iterate the content produced by European and international organizations, such as IHE, IHD, HL7 and others that are devoted to this challenge, which they create and maintain content for a range of user profiles. This material is too overwhelming to address the needs of senior management in any health care organization. In this sense, the Guide may be also seen also a “meta-guide” for the operational level and as such it can be continually enriched with further links to “information providers” such as IHE, I~HD, HL7 and other relevant organisations are added and become operational. The main design principle has been that:

(a) The top layer of information in the eHAction guide, which is mainly static (stable), can be sustained in the future by either one organisation or a collaborative community or group, as for example a subgroup of eHMSEG and/or a Community of Practice (CoP), with modest resource implications. Discussions on the potential interest to establish a

CoP around the topics of the Guide, leveraging on the informal network of hospitals that have contributed to its inception have already started and some exchange of practices has taken place.

(b) Its full layered content will need to be sustained in co-ordination with key EU level organisations that develop and maintain such content that will commit to creating and maintaining such content either for their own purposes or will in the future create it for the needs of the guide in terms of audience and needs addressed.

For these reasons, the guide is made accessible as a [web page on the eHAction website](#).

For the Guide to remain current, it is important that it is reviewed at planned intervals or if significant technological or legal changes occur, to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness. eHAction explorations have resulted in a number of Recommendations on a broader consultation with the eHealth Stakeholders and the Member States in order to arrive, timely, at a meaningful and sustainable hand-over of the Guide at the end of the Action. These Recommendations are also part of the Guide documentation brought forward for discussion.

3. Format of procedure in the meeting

For written procedure.